

## Community resources

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*courage is contagious*

## Viewing cable 06MANAGUA2247, MISKITO VOTE POTENTIAL OBSTACLE TO FSLN AMBITIONS

If you are new to these pages, please read an introduction on the [structure of a cable](#) as well as how to [discuss them](#) with others. See also the [FAQs](#)

### Understanding cables

Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

To understand the justification used for the classification of each cable, please use this [WikiSource](#) article as reference.

### Discussing cables

If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g. **#06MANAGUA2247**.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
<a href="#">06MANAGUA2247</a>	<a href="#">2006-10-10 23:48</a>	<a href="#">2011-08-30 01:44</a>	<a href="#">CONFIDENTIAL</a>	<a href="#">Embassy Managua</a>

Appears in these articles:

<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-30/Mundo/NotasSecundarias/Mundo2758456.aspx>  
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-30/Mundo/NotasSecundarias/Mundo2758467.aspx>  
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-30/Mundo/NotasSecundarias/Mundo2758468.aspx>  
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-30/Mundo/NotasSecundarias/Mundo2758464.aspx>  
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<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/4104/d-rsquo-escoto-en-onu-ldquo-un-desafio-de-ortega-a-ee-uu-rdquo>  
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/4102/estrada-y-la-ldquo-doble-cara-rdquo-ante-ee-uu>  
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/3966/la-ldquo-injerencia-rdquo-de-ee-uu-en-el-2006>  
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-23/Mundo/Relacionados/Mundo2758764.aspx>  
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-23/Mundo/NotaPrincipal/Mundo2758753.aspx>  
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/4041/millones-de-dolares-sin-control-y-a-discrecion>  
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/4040/la-ldquo-injerencia-rdquo-de-venezuela-en-2006>  
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/4047/rodrigo-barreto-enviado-de-ldquo-vacaciones-rdquo>  
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-16/Mundo/NotasSecundarias/Mundo2757239.aspx>  
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-16/Mundo/NotaPrincipal/Mundo2746658.aspx>  
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-16/Mundo/Relacionados/Mundo2757244.aspx>  
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-16/Mundo/Relacionados/Mundo2746673.aspx>  
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/3991/dra-yadira-centeno-desmiente-cable-diplomatico-eeuu>  
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/3968/pellas-pronostico-a-eeuu-victoria-de-ortega-en-2006>  
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/3967/barreto-era-ldquo-fuente-confiable-rdquo-para-eeuu>

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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 7859  
INFO RUEHZA/WHA CENTRAL AMERICAN COLLECTIVE  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHINGTON DC

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANAGUA 002247

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WHA/CEN FOR SCHIFFER

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/10/2016  
TAGS: [KDEM](#) [NU](#) [PGOV](#) [PINR](#)  
SUBJECT: MISKITO VOTE POTENTIAL OBSTACLE TO FSLN AMBITIONS

Classified By: Classified by Ambassador P. Trivelli for reasons 1.4b

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: Despite the Sandinista National Liberation Front's (FSLN) significant campaign efforts in the remote North Atlantic Autonomous Zone (RAAN), the indigenous Miskito population remains staunchly anti-Sandinista. In response, the FSLN-allied Yatama government has forced unelected leaders onto Miskito communities in violation of the law, creating civil unrest and low-grade violence. The FSLN's efforts may be part of larger plan to facilitate illicit trade on the Atlantic Coast. END SUMMARY

#### A Battle for Hearts and Minds

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¶2. (C) The humble soft-spoken ex-resistance fighter, Osorno Coleman - aka "Commandante Blas" - is locked in a battle of ideals against the FSLN's powerful PR machinery in the RAAN. Coleman is urging his fellow Miskitos never to forget the past and the atrocities committed against the Miskito Indians in the 1980s by the Sandinistas. Using disturbing video footage shot in the 1980s (from the Documentary "Nicaragua Was Our Home") featuring interviews with Miskitos, newspaper articles, and his own words, Coleman recently appeared on Channel 2's popular morning talk show "Primer Plano" to remind the nation about what happened to the Miskito people.

¶3. (C) Coleman, who was known as a fierce fighter during the 1980s and is now running as a deputy for Montealegre,s Nicaraguan Liberal Alliance (ALN) party, is a leader in the Miskito counter-campaign against the FSLN. With few resources and little logistical support, Coleman relies on the determined nature of the Miskito people and his own reputation to help resist the FSLN. On Oct 4, Coleman sat down with Poloff to describe the FSLN,s campaign efforts on the Atlantic Coast.

#### Yatama,s Alliance with the FSLN

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¶4. (U) In the May 4, 2006 regional elections in the RAAN, Yatama - the indigenous Miskito political party founded in the 1980s by anti-Sandinista fighters - won 13 seats, the FSLN won 16 seats, and the Constitutional Liberal Party (PLC) won 16 seats. That same evening, Ortega announced an alliance with Brooklyn Rivera, president of Yatama, giving Ortega a majority 29-vote block in the Regional Council. Ten days later, according to Coleman, 90% of the Yatama leadership denounced the alliance and joined the ALN. Since the split, there has been growing tension between the two Yatama groups. In a surprising move, Sandy Bay,s Yatama mayor, Elisabeth Henriquez, went so far as to dance on stage with Daniel Ortega during the July 19 celebration of the

## Sandinista Revolution.

### FSLN,s Proselytizing Efforts Fail

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15. (C) Much of the FSLN,s campaign success in Nicaragua,s rural areas is due to its well-established party infrastructure, enabling them to go door-to-door with their campaign messages. However, according to Coleman, this strategy has failed in the RAAN. Every time an FSLN campaign caravan attempts to enter a Miskito village, hostile crowds throwing stones and food and waving anti-FSLN signs chase them away. Coleman recounted one occasion where the FSLN visited a Miskito village with sodas and snacks and had them promptly thrown back at them by the villagers. On another occasion, Brooklyn Rivera asked a local teacher if he could stay in the teacher,s house one evening instead of returning home. The teacher responded that he could not allow it because the teacher would face physical harm from the villagers. The FSLN have also tried using the prestige of an ex-combatant - known as Tiger 17, famous for wearing his pistols like a cowboy - to influence the Miskito villagers. This effort also failed because the Miskito,s view him as a traitor and drove him out of town with rocks.

### A Change in Tactics - Using the Airwaves

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16. (SBU) As a result, reports Coleman, the FSLN now uses the radio to spread their message. Using Radio Caribe, La Portanissima, Radio Baca, and Radio Juvenil, the FSLN is bombarding the RAAN with campaign messages. At a funding level of 7,000 Cordobas a month (approx. US\$400), Coleman,s opposition group cannot compete with the FSLN. Coleman claims, however, that most Miskitos, change stations or turn off their radios when they hear FSLN advertisements.

### Influencing the Influencers

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17. (C) Coleman also revealed that the FSLN - through Brooklyn Rivera - has been replacing the local judges and coordinators with FSLN-allied personnel. According to Coleman, these actions violate Law 445, which gives Miskito communities the legal right to elect their judges and coordinators. Acting much like a mayor, the local coordinators are responsible for organizing civic events and village work projects such as communal harvests as well as allocating local government resources. Coleman reports that Rivera has successfully over-ruled community decisions and imposed his own people in at least eight communities. In many more, the people are embroiled in struggles to elect or keep their own candidates.

18. (C) This new tactic, explained Coleman, is much more dangerous than campaign propaganda because the judges and coordinators wield significant formal and informal authority in Miskito communities. In the communities where Rivera has imposed his own people, the level of civil unrest and low-grade violence have increased. Judges are ruling in favor of FSLN or pro-FSLN Yatama supporters and coordinators are using local resources to support the FSLN campaign. Aside from these abuses of formal power, Coleman warned, is the more insidious issue of informal influence. Culturally, Miskito,s put a lot of faith in their leaders and are easily influenced by them.

### Money and Meat

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19. (C) Coleman commented on two additional FSLN tactics used to influence voters. The FSLN has been paying Miskito community leaders 150 Cordobas (US\$8.50) to vote for the FSLN and to encourage others to do the same. In addition, the FSLN has promised to slaughter hundreds of cattle the week before the election and distribute free meat to villagers in the RAAN. These cattle have been in place near Miskito villages for the past several months in preparation for the

elections. Coleman reports that many village leaders have approached him for advice, asking whether they should accept the money and meat. Coleman,s response: "This is a small down payment on a very large debt. Take the food and money and vote for someone else."

#### PLC Sends Message of ALN-FSLN Alliance

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¶10. (SBU) Coleman also mentioned that the Constitutional Liberal Party (PLC) is announcing that the ALN and FSLN have joined forces, using as evidence the recent defection from the ALN to the FSLN of Salvador Talavera, the president of the Nicaraguan Resistance Party (PRN), a key ALN ally.

¶11. COMMENT: (C) What happens in the RAAN will likely impact both in the elections and the next administration. The FSLN,s interest in the RAAN and Atlantic Coast extends well beyond the elections. According to Javier Williams-Slate, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs and a Miskito from the RAAN, the FSLN, using Venezuelan financing, is buying up large tracts of land on the Atlantic Coast in order to facilitate illicit trade in timber, ore and narcotics. The FSLN may also be interested in oil exploration off the Atlantic Coast.

An FSLN judge in the Atlantic South (RAAS) recently upheld a questionable injunction challenging the way in which offshore exploration rights were awarded to two U.S. firms. (NOTE: Embassy is working to remove the injunction. END NOTE) An Ortega victory would help solidify FSLN and Venezuelan control of the Atlantic Coast. If Ortega does not win, the FSLN still controls the RAAN Regional Counsel through the FSLN-Yatama 29-seat voting block achieved in May,s regional elections, and Ortega supporter Brooklyn Rivera is certain to obtain a National Asssembly seat. Either way, the RAAN and entire Atlantic Coast may once again become a focus of internal conflict.

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